

FROM THE TREASURES OF SYRIA

ESSAYS ON ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
IN HONOUR OF STEFANIA MAZZONI

edited by

Paola Ciafardoni and Deborah Giannessi



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Cover image: Ivory calf from Tell Afis (IX century BC). Photo Maurizio Necci.

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PREFACE
STEFANIA MAZZONI OÙ L'APPLICATION PARFAITE
DE L'« ARCHÉOLOGIE DE L'ESPOIR »

Depuis la publication magistrale d'Ernest Renan de sa mission de Phénicie, notre discipline est dotée d'une base solide qui lui permettra de dépasser d'une façon décisive et définitive les limites de son action en confirmant que l'« espoir » est un principe primordial pour que l'archéologue prouve son existence.

Mais l'« archéologie de l'espoir » n'est pas seulement un principe, un idéal, c'est aussi une tâche qu'on devrait cultiver au fond de chacun de nous afin d'apporter à notre monde archéologique une dimension universelle capable de nous épargner des absurdités conceptuelles et surtout des monstruosité morales. Elle doit libérer l'archéologue de ce qui l'opprime et rendre sa société savante capable d'affronter les principales questions de son message : comme le dit Renan, « la sincérité absolue, qui est la règle de l'architecture, ce devoir de ne rien dissimuler, de ne rien faire pour l'ostentation et l'apparence, cette grande obligation de toujours supposer qu'on travaille pour l'éternité, supposent une force morale que l'antiquité classique seule a connue ».

Ainsi, l'espoir comme devoir archéologique, est l'engagement d'un idéal pour permettre à notre discipline d'être libre dans son univers noble, car « aucun droit n'est supérieur à celui de l'esprit humain cherchant la vérité ».

Cette clarté de notre langage doit nous amener à agir avec une force interne fondée sur un « espoir archéologique » puissant qui constitue un discours militant de multiples formes : utopique, révolutionnaire mais aussi traditionnelle. L'espoir va refonder notre pensée archéologique dans ses diverses spécifications.

C'est dans cette perspective claire que Renan s'approprie dans son expérience au Levant, il y a plus qu'un siècle et demi, les moyens de construire l'espoir dans une harmonie où l'« histoire est ... en parfait accord avec les monuments » , car toutes les conditions sont ainsi réunies pour nous faire animer un débat qui n'est d'ailleurs qu'un épisode, dans notre archéologie fort mouvementée, sur le chemin de l'application réelle de l'espoir dans sa forme la plus parfaite. Ainsi, « chaque peuple crée au moins une des conditions fondamentales de la conservation de ses monuments. L'architecture est le critérium le plus sûr de l'honnêteté, du jugement, du sérieux d'une nation. Un vieux mur est un témoin historique sans appel » .

Nulle part on ne voit mieux qu'ici combien l'« archéologue de l'espoir » doit se contenter de suivre notre destin pour construire une discipline capable de fournir à chacun de nous les cadres et les points d'appui de sa prise de conscience intime en même temps que de sa prise de possession de sa discipline.

L'archéologue est inséparable de son espace d'espoir et sa situation personnelle dans sa discipline doit passer par l'espoir, qui lui permet de retracer le sens de la terre et d'apprécier correctement la valeur de son héritage.

Une telle perspective ne laisse guère de place au désespoir, elle va pousser, au contraire, jusqu'aux extrêmes limites l'espoir et la volonté d'un regard attentif pour sauvegarder l'accomplissement de notre tâche délicate, surmonter notre « archéologie de malheur » et laisser le champ libre à une « archéologie de bonheur » capable de chercher à comprendre, aimer et sauver notre cher héritage.

Dur message qui fait crier notre chère archéologie car l'archéologue sans espoir n'est pas un archéologue libéré, c'est un archéologue sans volonté sincère, un archéologue qui évoque toujours une exigence morale fragile, une pensée crispée par l'univers noir qui annihile son action.

Ainsi, l'« archéologie de l'espoir » comme idéal est d'abord une action, celle qui nous permet de nous éloigner d'une discipline corrompue pour rejeter ce qui est et aller de l'avant. C'est l'engagement que Stefania Mazzoni illustre au travers de son action sur notre terre syrienne.

Elle a pratiqué une utopie archéologique qui privilégie une vision d'un futur meilleur pour notre discipline afin de susciter une discussion ferme lorsqu'il est question de faire intervenir l'héritage de nos ancêtres.

C'est dans cette perspective immuable qu'elle s'approprie nos pionniers nationaux et leur « archéologie de noblesse ». Elle montre solennellement que nous ne pouvons pas expliquer un succès archéologique par des découvertes glorieuses, car le concept de la gloire révèle une satisfaction limitée par le temps. Pour elle, la véritable archéologie demande des sacrifices personnels destinés à diminuer l'« archéologie de la souffrance » et l'« archéologie de l'humiliation » propres en ce moment à notre archéologie nationale.

Cette attitude nous rend capable de voir à quel point il est essentiel aujourd'hui de croire à une « archéologie de l'espoir » et de prendre en main le devenir de ses pratiques et par-là notre futur redressement, en mettant en question de notre comportement actuel où sont en jeu certains agissements liés à l'« archéologie de l'absurde ».

Par son engagement dans cette quête à la recherche de l'« archéologie de l'espoir » sur un chantier énigmatique entouré des merveilles cachées soigneusement par un tribut araméen redoutable, Stefania Mazzoni avoue avoir libéré nos émotions dans un idéal quasi platonicien de concilier idées et pratique au cœur de notre discipline.

C'est ainsi qu'en décrivant minutieusement toutes les étapes de sa démarche elle révèle les principaux acteurs de son archéologie et propose une stratégie fondée sur la mise au rebut de notre « archéologie de malheur » par l'application d'une « archéologie du bonheur » liée étroitement à nos valeurs. Pour elle, cet espoir joyeux est capable de réduire notre souffrance et de préparer une résurrection.

Mazzoni est peut-être une des dernières archéologues libres, une des rares chevalières qui refuse la destruction de l'« archéologie de l'espoir ». Elle fut tout naturellement amenée à mobiliser sa vie et son énergie pour lutter contre l'« archéologie de l'exploitation » et l'« archéologie de la domination ». Elle est par-là la gardienne des valeurs nobles de nos grands maîtres, toujours en lutte contre l'asservissement de l'archéologue et l'esprit décadent de l'archéologie.

Popiel, le 23 janvier 2015

Michel Al-Maqdissi
DGAM – Damas
Musée du Louvre, Paris

INTRODUCTION

At the end of June the season at Tell Afis was drawing to a close. After two months of excavations, which always began just after Easter, the archaeological field work ended with the arrival of the first real heat of summer, when temperatures easily reached 40 degrees. Such days we spent many afternoons on the mound, doing the last drawings of the excavation, cleaning sections, and pondering the final conclusions of the season. We loved those quite afternoons, outside the busy and bustling activity of the actual excavations. They were the times of truth, when you could finally hope to understand and complete the results for which you had worked so hard. In those moments there was a deep sense of peace, the warmth of the slowly setting sun, the dry breeze which brought to you the smell of the parched earth, the sight of the horizon where patches of red soil alternated with the pale yellow colours of the crops ready for harvest, a timeless picture, with the slow movement of flocks and people returning home after a long day.

It was at the end of such days that you could finally felt the richness of what you had just experienced through long weeks in Syria. These memories and images remain with us, as do many others, of all the happy hours spent with our Syrian friends, our team mates, and not least our indefatigable director and teacher, Stefania Mazzoni.

This book was conceived as a tribute to Stefania's contribution to the discovery and study of the 'Treasures of Syria', as well as to those treasures themselves. Well do we realise that the unique archaeological heritage of Syria represents but one of its treasures, and we feel privileged to have enjoyed so many of them. As a beautiful country and a vibrant society Syria welcomed and fascinated all of us, in spite of manifest social and political problems. The Syria we knew, loved, and experienced together with Stefania now seems a mere shadow, as the country for a fifth year remains embroiled in a tragic and devastating civil war, bringing unspeakable and heartbreaking suffering to its people. We ardently hope that the courage and resilience of the Syrian people will eventually prevail and reforge peace and prosperity. The richness and beauty of Syria's past bear witness to an enduring spirit which surely cannot be extinguished.

Stefania's association with Syrian archaeology began in 1968 when she, as a student at the University of Rome, arrived in Syria as member of the team working at Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla) under the direction of her teacher Paolo Matthiae. Work at Mardikh was followed by other assignments organised by Matthiae. In 1973 she joined the Italian team working at Tell Fray, an important site on the Euphrates, threatened by flooding with the closure of the Tabqa Dam. In 1978 and 1981 she assisted the team excavating at Tell Tuqan, another key Syrian site not far from Mardikh. Already in 1970, followed by further work in 1972 and 1978, she became familiar with the large site of Tell Afis, located some

70 km south of Aleppo, and it was finally here that she found the place where she invested much of her field career. In coordination with Paolo Matthiae she began a new project of major excavation at Afis in 1986, a project which was pursued for nearly 25 years until the current crisis in Syria blocked it in 2011. From the onset the work at Afis was organised and executed in close cooperation between Stefania, now professor at the University of Pisa, and her close friend and colleague Serena Cecchini from the University of Bologna. This partnership and the firm commitment to Tell Afis proved a fruitful combination.

Tell Afis is a classic Near Eastern tell, with a high ‘acropolis’ and an extensive lower town. With a 24 hectare extent it counts as an important regional center or capital. Here Stefania and Serena concentrated efforts on organising a truly multi-disciplinary team to investigate all aspects of the site, and this effort, over the years, built up a vast and very precise bulk of data on Syrian archaeology, which is hardly paralleled elsewhere. Of seminal importance was Stefania’s and Serena’s insistence on continuous and persistent reporting of the evidence retrieved, which has created an invaluable reference for much archaeological work in Syria. Obviously these approaches were highly stimulating for the many students and experts who joined the Afis excavations, and we ourselves are grateful to have experienced this, and to have enjoyed the always warm and human ambience Stefania and Serena projected in their teams. The many important data from Afis, carefully collected with the highest standards, will stand the test of time, and also include obvious master-pieces and ‘treasures’, like the magnificent, gold-plated ivory carving adorning the cover of this volume, and important Late Bronze Age tablets found during the most recent seasons, just to mention two examples.

At ‘home’, in Pisa, and later Florence where she was appointed professor in 2006, Stefania’s teaching has covered the entire field of Near Eastern Archaeology, and many, many Italian as well as foreign students have benefitted from her wise, committed, and demanding guidance. And scientific publications have issued with impressive speed from her personal research: ceramics, chronology, seals, art, iconography are favourites, but hardly any subject has been neglected.

This is not the place to recall all of Stefania’s contributions to her field in detail, and we are sure that there will be much more to follow. While still working at Afis Stefania in 2008 initiated a new important project of survey and excavation in Turkey, at Uşaklı Höyük, and this promising site will surely yield many discoveries in coming years.

To honour all these achievements adequately is surely difficult, but we hope the present volume at least signals good intentions. Tell Afis is represented by special studies on ceramics and figurines, all from levels investigated very comprehensively at Afis, and which document the transition from the Late Bronze into the Iron Age. Finds from Afis are also included in other articles in the volume, like a fragmentary stele studied in the article by A. Otto, who extends perspectives on iconographic elements back into the early Neolithic. The analysis of iconography is an important subject in several other papers presented here, and of course reflects one of Stefania’s main scholarly interests. Another

of Stefania's interests, carved ivories, are treated in two papers. Other contributions concern results of excavations at important sites in Syria and the Levantine region, like Amrith, the Southern Gate at Zincirli and its sculptured slabs, and the early third millennium palace at Tell el-'Abd. Tell Atchana/Alalakh, Ugarit, Tell Mozan, Tell Banat, Tell Fekheriye are represented by studies and interpretations of statues, seals, ceramics, and Stefania's teacher, Paolo Matthiae, presents a major study of the origin of Assyrian obelisks.

The enthusiasm with which the authors responded to our invitation to contribute to this volume clearly reflects the respect and friendship Stefania has earned from a large circle of Italian and international colleagues, and we thank all of them for their participation and collaboration. We are aware that many more would have liked to contribute, and had to make many hard choices to keep within the bounds of a single volume and its thematic focus. The *Tabula Gratulatoria* is an attempt to include at least a core of the many other friends and colleagues who would wish to honour Stefania. We have strived to reach as many as possible, but with Stefania's many-fold activities and contacts there no doubt remain some unfortunate omissions for which we offer our apologies.

To Michel al-Maqdissi we owe a very special gratitude for accepting immediately to write the preface to the volume, and for his support and enthusiasm for the whole project.

We could not have pursued with success the compilation of the volume without some 'hidden' and 'secret' collaboration. Alfonso Archi supported the project throughout, and concretely provided much 'insider' information and important advice. Stefania's friend and long time co-director at Tell Afis, Serena Cecchini, worked silently, sometimes very hard, to help us complete the puzzle, and provided the important appreciation published here. And we should also record our gratitude to all the other collaborators, students, friends, and colleagues of Stefania, who for one reason or another have been contacted and gave us information and other help.

Last but not least we are grateful to the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO) in Leiden for accepting the volume for publication in the PIHANS series, to the NINO publications' officer, C. van Zoest, for unfailing and very proficient help with formatting the volume, and to Peeters in Leuven for printing a beautiful book!

*Paola Ciafardini and Deborah Giannessi
Rome and Leiden, in January 2015*

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A PALACE FROM THE EARLY THIRD MILLENNIUM IN TELL EL-'ABD (RAQQA PROVINCE)

Uwe Finkbeiner

To Stefania Mazzoni, as a mark of friendship

Abstract

During a visit to Tell el-'Abd in 1991 it was obvious that the water level of the reservoir (Lake Assad) had fallen so drastically that a new start after Adnan Bounni's previous excavations seemed promising. At the north slope of the tell several layers of very strong mud brick walls accumulated to a height of almost 5 metres and suggested the existence of a big building. In 3 campaigns of excavations several building levels of a palace-like structure were exposed; via a fortified access it was directly connected with the north gate. The building was founded in the first third of the 3rd millennium, period EME 2 according to the new ARCANE chronology, the subsequent building levels extend into period EME 4 in the 24th century BC. This contribution is meant to outline the design of the building and the history of its construction as well as to elucidate its importance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In August 1990 we had originally planned to start excavations on Tell Aswad, a little bit upstream from Ramadi, on the Euphrates, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait put an abrupt end to that undertaking. Soon it became clear that there was a war in the wings and that there was no hope for more favorable conditions in the near future. So we were on the lookout for another possibility, for example a site in Syria. When the following year we paid a visit to Damascus with that aim in mind, Adnan Bounni, then Director for Excavations, received us with the words: *"Whoever has once worked in Syria, is always welcome here."* He had himself excavated on Tell el-'Abd in 1971/72, and we thank him for the opportunity to continue his work there from 1992 to 1994.

Tell el-'Abd is situated opposite from Jebel Aruda, only ca. 3 km north of Munbaqa. At our first visit in 1991 the tell was a peninsula extending far into Assad Lake (Pl. 1a). The water-mark was extremely low, not at the normal 304 m above sea-level, but approximately at 298.50, that is roughly at the 11 m contour of our topographical plan (Fig. 1). The movement of the waters had left a high edge of up to 5 m and a profile revealing



Plate 2a: Tell el-'Abd, mud-brick walls level I.5 seen from the northeast with Rooms A1 (left) and A2 (center) 1992.



Plate 2b: Tell el-'Abd, Town wall levels I.5-I.4 seen from the north. At center right the gate jamb of level I.5 (1993).

The findings of that earliest level in squares 17/25 and 17/26 in the west were supplemented in the north, in squares 18/27-19/27, by a gate, from where a gateway the floor of which has been renewed several times led to Building A, reaching it at a level of 14.90 m (Fig. 2). The photo (Pl. 2b) shows the core of the town wall, a stone wall running diagonally from upper left to lower right. At the center of the picture a corner can be made out – the gate jamb of the earliest phase, its counterpart is not preserved. The broad mud-brick wall in front of the core wall must be understood as a reinforcement of the town wall. A stone wall running obliquely to the direction of the gateway belongs to a gate of level I.4.

The erection of a town wall with gate and of the palace means that level I.5 is part of a new plan, such as can only be initiated by a powerful builder. Whether the complete place was newly founded remains questionable, as in Excavation Area II ceramics were found that predate level I.5. On the other hand it cannot be ruled out that there exist earlier remains of Building A, that we have not discovered.

Level I.4: In the campaigns of 1993 and 1994 an immediately following later level of Building A was exposed further to the east in square 18/25 and in the west half of 19/25. Level I.4 lies almost 2 m above level I.5. Despite that distance level I.4 is sure to take up

TRAVAUX SYRIENS À AMRITH I. INTRODUCTION ET SÉQUENCE STRATIGRAPHIQUE

Michel Al-Maqdissi

Résumé

Présentation des travaux réalisés à Amrith depuis la première action effectuée par Ernest Renan en 1860 et la présentation de la nouvelle séquence stratigraphique fouillée en 2010 sur le versant occidental du petit tell qui se trouve à l'est du sanctuaire de Melqart.

PLAN

- I. Introduction
- II. Développement de la recherche à Amrith
- III. La séquence fouillée en 2010
- IV. Conclusion
- V. Abréviations
- VI. Bibliographie
- VII. Bibliographie sélective sur Amrith

I. INTRODUCTION

Le site d'Amrith se trouve au sud de la ville de Tartous, au bord de la mer. Il a fait l'objet d'une recherche archéologique intense durant plus d'un siècle et demi.

Il forme une immense agglomération orientée nord-sud de plus de 7 km de long sur environ 2 km de large (fig. 1).

Le centre du site comporte le sanctuaire de Melqart et une petite colline artificielle (Tell Amrith) de plan régulier avec plusieurs phases d'occupation (fig. 2). Ce centre est entouré par plusieurs zones d'habitation, d'un stade, de carrières et de nécropoles de types variés (construites, taillées dans le rocher, en pleine terre ou de crémations dans des jarres avec des stèles en pierre...).

Mais, M. Dunand alors engagé dans son travail à Byblos ne put reprendre ce dossier qu'après l'indépendance de la Syrie, c'est-à-dire en 1953 en collaboration avec Néssib Saliby, alors attaché technique au service des fouilles⁷. M. Dunand et N. Saliby programmèrent alors une série d'actions sur le terrain comportant d'abord le dégagement du sanctuaire dédié à Melqart, puis la fouille systématique du petit tell qui se trouve à l'ouest (fig. 7-10) et enfin le dégagement de plusieurs structures archéologiques, l'étude stratigraphique et la documentation de la nécropole qui se trouve dans la région environnante.



Fig. 7: Amrith 1954, fouille du tell, photographie prise à partir du naos du sanctuaire (Archives de Néssib Saliby conservées au Service des Fouilles et Etudes Archéologiques de Damas).



Fig. 8: Amrith 1954, les ouvriers devant le sanctuaire (Archives de Néssib Saliby conservées au Service des Fouilles et Etudes Archéologiques de Damas).



Fig. 9: Amrith 1954, la partie supérieure de la tombe-silo 7 (Archives de Néssib Saliby conservés au Service des Fouilles et Etudes Archéologiques de Damas et Dunand, Saliby et Kirichian 1954-1955: pl. II/2).

⁷ Dunand 1953.



Fig. 16: Amrith 2005, Statuette d'adorant en bronze (Institut du Monde Arabe).



Fig. 17: Amrith 2005, Sittules en bronze décorées par des motifs de tradition égyptienne (Institut du Monde Arabe).

FOUNDING AND PLANNING A NEW TOWN: THE SOUTHERN TOWN GATE AT ZINCIRLI

Marina Pucci

Abstract

Stefania Mazzoni's many scientific contributions to the archaeology of Iron Age northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia include iconographic analysis, architecture, and town planning. Her work during the 1980's and 1990's on the chronological sequences of the carved reliefs from the Iron Age (1974, 1977, 1994, 2011) and on the general understanding of the material culture, in addition to her reassessment (2000a and 2000b) of the Iron Age I to III sequence, has provided an important framework for recent field activities in that region dealing with that specific period. Moreover the archaeological sequence at Tell Afis has uncovered crucial elements on the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age, emphasizing the relevance of the materials and archaeological contexts in order to better understand changes in material culture. Her classes at the University in Pisa concerning Syro-Hittite archaeology coincided with her period of major academic production in this field and strongly influenced my research. Her enthusiastic and rigorous research methods positively influenced generations of students, including mine. This paper, which deals with the evidence of one of the Syro-Hittite sites and analyses a single monument, i.e. the town gate at Zincirli, from both iconographic, architectural, and topographic perspectives, therefore owes much to her seminal influence.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research at the site of Zincirli was carried out at the end of the 19th century by a German team financed by the Orient Comité (Wartke 2005), resumed by the Oriental Institute in 2006 (Scholen and Fink 2009a and b), and uncovered several building phases of a large settlement dating to the Iron Age¹. The settlement is structured into a walled upper citadel accessible by a single citadel gate (D in Fig. 1) and a large lower town accessible through three gates located NW (C in Fig. 1), NE (B in Fig. 1) and South (A in Fig. 1), the largest and main one being the southern one.

The fortification of the lower town together with the three gates were excavated by Humann in 1888 during the very first campaign at the site, and in 1891 they were re-in-

¹ I use in this article the following Iron Age periodization: Iron Age I (12th to mid-9th century BC), Iron Age II (mid-9th to beginning of the 7th cent. BC), Iron Age III (beginning of the 7th century BC to the 5th century BC), cf. Mazzoni 2000a, Pucci forthcoming. Drawings illustrating this article were made by the authour except Figs. 3-4 done by Corrado Alvaro.

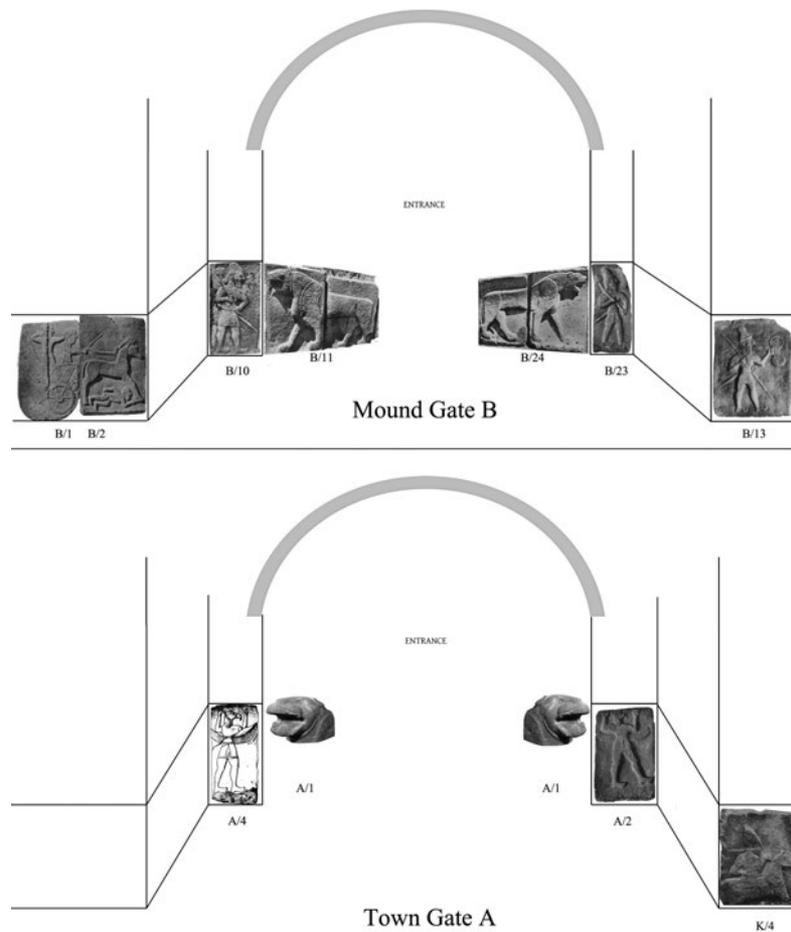


Fig. 4: Frontal views of “iconographic themes” on the Mound and Town Gate.

ish cemetery (Orthmann 1971, Pl. 66 shows the block still in its latest find-spot inside a modern wall).

In the same year the blocks were then reshaped on site in order to reduce their weight, were transformed into thin slabs, immediately removed from the site and transported to Berlin¹⁵. While digging in this area in 2012, it was possible to retrieve one of the remaining backs of these blocks and to measure its width. According to this information, to the measurements taken in the field of the single remaining block, to the measurement of the face of the carved slabs, taken by other scholars (mainly Orthmann 1971), and to the supposed measurements of the portal lions given by Humann, their original location has been reconstructed and mapped both on the plan and on the three dimensional recon-

¹⁵ Only one slab was not walled in the Pergamon exhibition, and I had the chance to measure its width to approximately 10 cm.

STORAGE JARS AND HOUSEHOLD STORAGE METHODS IN TELL AFIS BETWEEN LATE BRONZE AGE II AND IRON AGE II

Fabrizio Venturi

Abstract

In the transition between Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age many sites in the Levant show changes in material culture testifying to the alteration of local domestic customs. Among the different aspects of daily household economy, storage vessels are probably the more conservative in terms of shape and clay composition. Tell Afis (Syria) is one of the sites among others which demonstrates the adoption of new forms and new painted motifs in tableware and drinking vessels at the beginning of the Early Iron Age. This paper focuses the attention on the storage vessels and the storage installations in a period comprising the 13th-8th century BC, with the aim of analyzing elements of continuity or discontinuity in the storage strategies inside the urban context of the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

The mound of Tell Afis was selected in 1962 by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria, directed by P. Matthiae, as a promising site identified with Hazrek, the Aramaean capital of King Zakkur, whose stele was found in 1903 on the top of the acropolis by the French consul Henry Pognon. Stefania Mazzoni, with Serena Maria Cecchini, took over the direction of a joint project of the Universities of Rome, Pisa and Bologna in 1986, with the initial aim of producing a reliable stratigraphic sequence which could contribute to a better knowledge of the Iron Age Syrian chronology, still elusive at that time. The first activities on the ground took place in the southern lower town (Area D) where, between 1986-87, with further enlargement of the area in 1988-89, a building with a partial extension of 450 sq meters was brought to light. The results of this extensive excavation (Mazzoni 1987) together with those from the nearby sounding D2 (Cecchini 1987) led to the definition of the development of the local material culture in Iron Age II-III and its typological cataloguing (Oggiano 1997). Among the different pottery categories, storage ware had a particular relevance since building D was revealed to have had important storage functions. 12 complete jars were found *in situ* and this rich evidence contributed to defining the morphological features of the typical 8th-7th century BC cigar-shaped *pithoi* (Mazzoni 1990; Oggiano 1997). Stefania Mazzoni, in her attentive approach to the typological and functional study of pottery as a means of analyzing social and economic processes, broadened the research from a regional perspective with the publication of the Iron Age II-III evidence from Tell Mardikh and Tell Tuqan (Mazzoni 1992a). Furthermore, the opening in Tell Afis in 1988 of the step trench of Area E1 and adjacent Area E2 on the



Plate 1: Storage room in building E, photo from North East.



Plate 2: Aerial view of building B, from South East.

POWER AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN ANCIENT URKESH

Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati

It is a pleasure to dedicate this article to Stefania Mazzoni whose constant enthusiasm for life and scholarship has been a pleasure to share over many years of collegial and personal friendship.

Abstract

The unique combination of the Urkesh archaeological record and the monumental architecture excavated at the site in addition to the iconographic and textual evidence provides a rare vantage point for research on expressions of power and the construction of personal and social identity in this early city. Two aspects of identity construction are explored: urban identity formation in Urkesh and personal construction of elite identity; the impact of both on the urban society as well as the wider metropolitan area is discussed. The beginning of a focus on urban identity in Urkesh can be found in the fourth millennium with the construction of a high terrace with, in all likelihood, a temple on top; this terrace was a locus of ritual activity until late Mittani times. The article analyzes the personal identity construction of king Tupkish, queen Uqnitum and court servants connected with her through both iconography and seal inscriptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of identity has been of primary interest to scholars in the last several decades. Some in particular have paid attention to the nature of ancient identity construction, such as expressed in various historical contexts; these studies provide a framework for thinking about personal and social identity construction factors operative even in the remote past.¹ The question is how effective were certain patterns of behavior in helping to create personal and social identity within any early city, the villages in its hinterland and beyond. This depends to a large extent on social and political purposes, because the negotiation of identity and power are intertwined at a fundamental level. Since identity is

¹ For relevant works on identity and further bibliography see Abdela et al. 2006; Carter and Philip 2010; Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Domingo Sanz et al. 2008; Kuijt 2002; Leve 2011; Macginnis 2012; Mattingly 2011; Revell 2009; Shennan 1994; Steadman and Ross 2010; Varien and Potter, 2008; Wendrich 2012; Cuzzo and Guidi 2013, and the by now classic Jones, 1997. For a different view cf. Remotti 2010.



Fig. 4: Landscape of Urkesh and the Mardin Pass.

plains of northeastern Syria. Individuals traveling in any direction would have been able to use it as a point of reference and therefore a guide. This guide can more precisely be appreciated when we realize that in the flat landscape of the plains, a high terrace would have helped travelers calculate how far they were from the Mardin Pass, for those traveling north-south (Fig. 4). The terrace served as an intermediate point to calculate the length in distance and travel in terms of time to or from this major pass. Even those traveling east-west would have benefited from such a point in the plains since the Mardin Pass is so prominent and can be seen along much of this route. In this case the high terrace of Urkesh helped travelers situate themselves in an east-west sense too. The construction of a prominent beacon at this point in the plain was no accident; the new city wanted to be seen as a focal point and obviously made fundamental social and economic efforts to achieve this.

The impact of a high temple terrace not only was felt by travelers, but also by neighbors. The small towns and villages within the orbit of the city would have benefited in a number of ways from the growing prestige of the city, from increased economic activities connected with the expansion of the city to heightened social status for everyone connected with the city, especially of course the local elites in these towns and villages (Kelly-Buccellati 2013). The impact would have been felt in the wider sphere as well. A new



Fig. 16: Seal of Ishtar-kinum.

engaged because it holds something being stirred. In the Tupkish and Uqnitum seals all vessels are being actively employed (for a discussion of the sacrificial importance of this scene cf. Recht, forthcoming).

Craft appreciation, sustained and encouraged at the highest social level, can only be part of a larger educational purpose in which technological knowledge allows a society to integrate moral and social values as part of building cultural identity. In doing this the Urkesh artists succeeded in representing everyday events without trivializing them. Part of this is because each scene is unique in iconography, and each scene is iconographically connected to a whole and consistent range of communication themes. Each scene contains multiple registers of information which can be “read” in various ways by different groups. The “unpacking” of the information in the various “registers” in the Urkesh seal designs allows us to view not only the value held by elites for these aspects of the local culture, but also the use made by these local socio-political groups to communicate their interconnected identity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The city of Urkesh, at an early stage in the city’s development achieved an identity status as a major religious focal point in the region, the only one for which we know the ancient name of the worshipped deity. The fact that the city continued to maintain and use such an impressive temple terrace is a strong indication of the felt importance of this religious identity within the city itself and its surrounding hinterland. The identity communication to a wider social audience was important to the city itself and dependant villages.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN OBELISKS

Paolo Matthiae

Abstract

The obelisk featuring carved panels on all four faces is a figurative monument, whose first attestations in Assyria date from the Middle Assyrian period, probably during Tiglatpileser I's reign, certainly from Ashurbelkala's time. Several monuments of this kind were placed at Ashur, Kalkhu, and Nineveh, and this genre, as is well known, was particularly prized in Shalmaneser III's time. The origin of this particular kind of monument is debated, but the prevailing opinion is that it descends from the direct knowledge of the Egyptian obelisks. In this contribution, on the contrary, I propose the hypothesis that Middle Assyrian obelisks descend from some Old Syrian monument found at Ebla. The tradition, as found in the Hurrian-Hittite poem called "Song of Release", according to which Ebla was destroyed by Pizikarra of Nineveh is a further point in favour of this proposal.

The oldest, surely dated, Middle Assyrian obelisk was discovered in Nineveh (Rassam 1897, 9; Börker-Klähn 1982; Curtis 2007). It belonged to Ashurbelkala (1073-1056 BC), and is known as the Broken Obelisk (BM 118898), as only the upper part is preserved, with the typical stepped apex, looking like a miniature *ziggurat*, as apparently was the custom with Neo-Assyrian obelisks; it bore one relief only, depicting the king, and two defeated sovereigns (Moortgat 1967, 126, Pl. 252).¹ This peculiar type of monument, aiming at spreading by means of text, and images the sovereign's accomplishments is well documented during the Neo-Assyrian period, particularly in Ashurnasirpal II's (883-859 BC), and Shalmaneser III's (858-814 BC) times, and it is quite likely that it was

¹ The identification of the Broken Obelisk inscription with a part of a redaction of Ashurbelkala's annals was made by Borger 1964, 135-142; on the other hand, Moortgat, 1967, 126, still believed that the attribution to Tiglatpileser I (1114-1076 BC), and his son Ashurbelkala was uncertain. Nowadays all doubts have been overcome: Grayson 1991b, 99-105. The stepped apex was canonical in Neo-Assyrian obelisks, as can be inferred from the fact that this peculiarity can be found, nearly identical, in both completely preserved obelisks, namely the White, and the Black Obelisks. Notwithstanding the very fragmentary conditions, also in Rassam's Obelisk, fragments i, and ii, belonging to the top register of the seven reconstructed, are stepped back to the top, so also this basalt monument was a classical Assyrian obelisk with stepped apex, as observed by Reade 1980, 5, Figs 2-3. Also among the remains of the Ashur obelisks, one fragment of Type II (II.1) is clearly the base of the stepped top of the usual typology: Orlamünde 2011, 25, Pl. 11. Recently Ornan 2007 maintained that the portrayal of Ashurbelkala seizing the double rope tying subdued enemies is a visual representation of the king's taking over a function previously held by the gods.

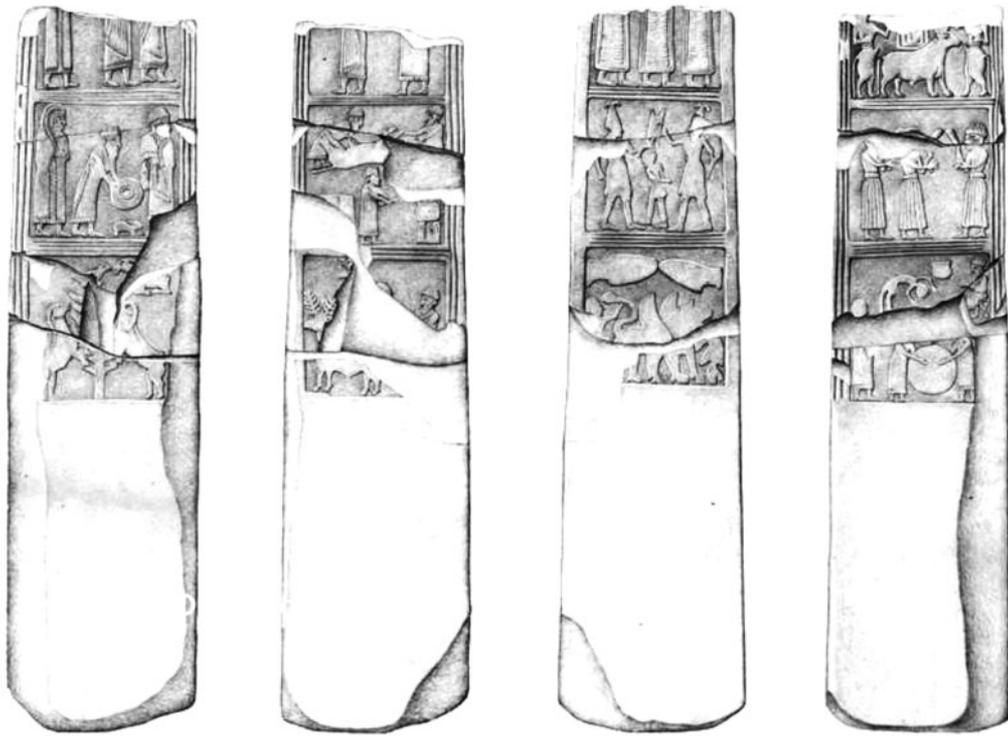


Fig. 6: Idlib, Archaeological Museum: Ishtar's Obelisk, from Tell Mardikh.
Drawing by Tiziana D'Este (Archaeological Expedition at Ebla).

325, Pl. XXIV; Matthiae 2011, 761-772, Figs 25-27), dating from between the first half of the XIXth century BC and the first half of the XVIIIth century BC feature very important analogies with Assyrian obelisks.²³ The two monuments were erected at the same time, and probably in a pair. Ishtar's stele has a rectangular section, certainly shorter than what is the rule in Assyrian obelisks, while Ishtar's obelisk has a nearly square section;²⁴ they

²³ Though the largest amount of remains of both monuments were found scattered, certainly after they had been broken into pieces at the time of the conquest, and destruction of Old Syrian Ebla, around 1600 BC, and, on the contrary, the base of Ishtar's stele was found still in place at the entrance to the small Shrine G3 (Matthiae 2013 [1986]), it is certain that both stele, and obelisk stood originally in the wide open space in front of Ishtar's Temple (Temple D), founded in Middle Bronze I, perhaps in the years around 1900 BC, or some decade before: Matthiae 2010, 312-318.

²⁴ Ishtar's obelisk is nearly 37.5 cm large, and 35.5 cm thick. Ishtar's stele is nearly 42 cm large, and 22 cm thick. Yet, notwithstanding these quite relevant differences in the size of the two monuments, as concerns width, and depth, the total structural analogy, concerning the high uncarved sector, the almost complete identity of the carved registers as concerns size (of course, only of the front, and back faces of the stele, with all four faces of the obelisk, because the panels of the sides of the stele are not square, but rectangular), the type of the frame with parallel grooves, and, most of all, the very strong corre-

A MIDDLE ASSYRIAN CENTAUR FROM TELL FEKHERIYE

Dominik Bonatz

This paper is dedicated to Stefania, who directed my interests and my professional path to the archaeology of Syria.

Abstract

A Middle Assyrian seal impressed on an administrative document found during the excavations in Tell Fekheriye in 2010 shows a vivid scene of a 'six-curled' hero and a centaur in combat. Of particular interest are the compositional principles involved in this scene and the design of the centaur which is unique in Late Bronze Age glyptic art. In this article I will argue for a local artistic creation which can be explained in the sociopolitical context of the growing Middle Assyrian state.

During the excavations at Tell Fekheriye in 2009 and 2010 a total of 51 Middle Assyrian texts and text fragments were recovered from a single depositional context (loc. 1035/1199) below the northeastern rooms of House 1 in Area C I/II at the western slope of the Tell. They were discarded in this area when the terrain was filled with compact soil, broken or smashed mud-bricks and potsherds in order to build a solid foundation for the floor of the subsequent building.¹ This stratigraphic relation shows that the tablets predate the erection of House 1, which falls in the reign of King Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233-1198 BC).² Given that some of the texts bear as eponym the name Mušabšiu-sibitti, who was a *limu* official during the first third of the reign of Šalmaneser I (1263-1234 BC), the whole corpus can be dated more precisely around 1250 BC.³ By that time it formed part of the local palace archive, as is indicated by the signature “property of the palace” on some of the large-size administrative lists which deal with the distribution of grain (Bonatz 2014, Fig. 10, TF 6077, TF 6343). Among the smaller tablets are juridical documents which were found within their unopened and sealed clay envelope. One of these documents (TF 6405)

¹ For a more detailed description of the archaeological context and some preliminary observations on the historical context of the text finds see Bartl/Bonatz 2013, 267-271; Bonatz 2013, 224-225; Bonatz 2014, 73-75.

² The absolute dates follow the 10 years shorter reign of Aššur-dan I (see Boese / Wilhelm 1979).

³ For the *limu* Mušabšiu-sibitti see Saporetti 1979, 83 (with references) and Freydank 1991, 191, 194.



Fig. 1: Clay tablet with envelope TF 6405.

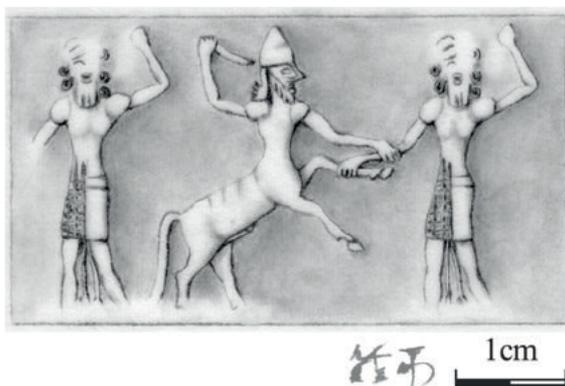


Fig. 2: Reconstruction of the seal impression on TF 6450.

is the sealed receipt for about 2000 liters of grain which were handed over to a certain Aššur-dammeq, son of Qibi-Aššur.⁴ This is an official legal document, marked with the seal of the official who issued it. To guarantee the document's integrity and to protect it from subsequent alteration, it was preserved in a sealed clay envelope. The content of the document is repeated on the outside of the envelope. The focus of this article is on the seal which was impressed on the obverse, reverse and four short sides of the clay envelope and on the document which this envelope contained (Fig. 1). The reconstructed seal impression measures 3.5 x 2.75 cm (Fig. 2).

⁴ For any information concerning the content of this and the other texts mentioned in this article I am grateful to Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum who is responsible for translating the Middle Assyrian texts found and already restored during the renewed excavations at Tell Fekheriye.

SYRO-PHOENICIAN IVORIES AT NIMRUD

Georgina Herrmann and Stuart Laidlaw

This small paper is a tribute to the work of two remarkable Professors, Stefania Mazzoni and Serena Cecchini of Pisa, Florence and Bologna. Both have long been interested in the ‘Nimrud ivories’ and have greatly contributed to their study. In addition to many important discoveries, they have also actually found an ivory, a small calf statuette (Mazzoni 2011, 28), in their excavations at the site of Tell Afis, not far from Hama. It is identical to many found at the site of Nimrud in Northern Iraq.

Abstract

The majority of the ivories found at Nimrud were not Assyrian in style but Levantine. Of these most can be assigned to the Phoenician tradition with its strong debt to the art of Egypt. A relatively recently defined tradition, the Syrian tradition, borrows heavily from Phoenician examples. The range of motifs is limited, the proportions are squatter and the panels are crowded. These ivories may represent the arts of the recently arrived Aramaean polities.

The first Nimrud ivories were found in the 19th century by Austen Henry Layard and William K. Loftus, but it was the excavations of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq from 1949-1963 and the Iraqi Department of Antiquities and Heritage that dramatically increased the known assemblage. Altogether thousands of pieces and fragments have been found in the palaces of the acropolis and particularly in the storerooms of Fort Shalmaneser Oates & Oates 2001, 226-238). The task of registration, conservation and publication has been a long one and is still on-going. The first major publication was in 1957 by R.D. Barnett, reprinted 1975, and recorded the ivories found by Layard and Loftus. Since then seven fascicules in the *Ivories from Nimrud* series,¹ as well as the outstanding ivories found by the Iraqis in Well AJ (Safar and al Iraqi 1987), have been published, making the majority of the ivories available for study. These publications have made it evident that most ‘Nimrud ivories’ were not made in Nimrud or Kalhu, the Assyrian cap-

¹ Orchard 1967, Mallowan & Davies 1970, Mallowan & Herrmann 1974, Herrmann 1986, Herrmann 1992, Herrmann & Laidlaw 2009 (n.d.), Herrmann & Laidlaw 2013. The abbreviation *I.N.* and the volume number is used for references to the *Ivories from Nimrud* series rather than the names of the various authors. The volumes have been published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, now the British Institute for the Study of Iraq.



Fig. 3a: Syrian version of a Pharaoh figure with sceptre and jug: *I.N.* IV, no. 337, ND 10494, MFA 65.992, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 3b: Syrian version of a Pharaoh figure with sceptre and jug: *I.N.* III, no. 87, ND 7579, MMA 59.107.15, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The suggestion of a shrine and the pairing of figures is omitted in any of the Syrian versions of this popular motif. The squat Pharaoh-figures on panels from Rooms SW37 and SW7 are typically Syrian in their proportions and in the corrupted versions of their crowns, versions of the Egyptian double crown and the triple atef crown, set on short Egyptian style wigs (Figs. 3a-b). They wear shawled garments with short skirts and long open overskirts. The jug of *I.N.* III, no. 87, has a crude voluted palmette flower growing from it: another floral feature rises from the jug of *I.N.* IV, no. 347. The carving of the garments of *I.N.* IV, nos. 347 and 350 is cruder than on the previous examples and the belts at the waists curve into volutes, as does the spiral at the front of the White Crown of *I.N.* IV, no. 350 (Figs. 4a-b). These panels and the various similar fragments illustrated in *I.N.* IV, pls. 79-81 all sit comfortably within the Syrian tradition. However, the fragment, *I.N.* IV, no. 357 (Fig. 5), is a very distant version of the familiar motif, only identifiable because of the carefully carved sceptre and jug.

Writing before the publication of the numerous Phoenician versions of this motif in *I.N.* VII, Cecchini thought that the ‘scanty variety of purely Phoenician pieces... could mean that the subject had limited diffusion in the Phoenician repertoire over both time and geographic area’, although she qualified this by saying that ‘an *argumentum ex silentio*



Fig. 8a: 'Classic Phoenician' hero fighting a griffin: *I.N.* VII, no. 190, ND 65509, IM 65509, Iraq Museum, Baghdad.



Fig. 8b: Syrian 'Crown and Scale' hero fighting a griffin: *I.N.* IV, no. 316, ND 10471, MMA 61.197.11, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

'CROWN AND SCALE' IVORIES

Another design popular across the area was that of a hero fighting a griffin. There are many Phoenician examples, both carved on openwork panels and on a range of small trapezoidal plaques (*I.N.* VII, 37, Fig. 2i, row 2, and 61, Fig. 3f). All is calm and elegant. There is no sign of a struggle: the griffin walks calmly beside the hero and turns its head to receive the spear (Fig. 8a). It is, however, very different on panels of the Syrian 'Crown and Scale' group. Here the figures crowd the panel. The hero pins the flying griffin to the ground, trampling it with his foot and forcing the spear into the griffin's open beak (Fig. 8b).

While assembling sets of similar panels is easy – four 'Crown and Scale' panels with the hero and griffin were, for instance, found in Room SW37 (*I.N.* IV, nos. 316-318), with two more in Room SE10, the *rab ekalli's* suite, and another in Room NE59 (*I.N.* V, nos. 240-241, 328) – it is more challenging to create a workshop group across the subjects, and it is here that diagnostic features, in combination with a general similarity of style and technique, help. One such diagnostic is the crowns: those worn by the heroes are flattened versions of the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt (Fig. 8b) with even flatter versions worn by openwork, human-headed sphinxes from Room SW11/12 (Fig. 9a: *I.N.* VII,

RÉFLEXION SUR LE LIT D'IVOIRE DU PALAIS ROYAL D'OUGARIT

Annie Caubet

Résumé

L'auteur remarque que le lit d'ivoire du palais royal d'Ougarit, peut-être créé pour une cérémonie de mariage royal, est associé à la consommation ritualisée de mets et boisson, peut-être accompagnée de musique, ce qui ferait de ce meuble exceptionnel du Bronze récent final un précurseur du lit de banquet oriental au I^{er} millénaire et de la kliné du symposium grec.

Stefania Mazzoni a abordé avec brio l'étude des céramiques sous l'angle de leur fonction sociale, à propos des banquets du palais et des tombes royales d'Ebla (Mazzoni 1994). Depuis lors, plusieurs colloques et articles se sont intéressés au thème du festin royal dans les sociétés antiques (Lafont 2008, Durand 2011; Grandjean, Hugoniot, Lion 2013; Caubet 2013 pour Ougarit). L'examen de la vaisselle et des ustensiles de service sert désormais à reconstituer les manières de table, et fait apparaître comment sont partagées d'une rive à l'autre de la Méditerranée, les façons de boire et manger durant l'âge du Bronze : ainsi, les mêmes récipients, comme le cratère ou le rhyton, sont mis au service d'une consommation ritualisée de boissons et de mets. Les représentations figurées conservent ainsi le souvenir d'une véritable mise en scène du pouvoir, une ostentation de l'abondance accordée par la bienveillance divine (Winter 2013). Dans cette mise en scène, le mobilier joue évidemment un rôle important: trône, table guéridon, marchepied, magnifient le convive divin ou royal.

L'une des mutations majeures intervenues dans l'image du festin entre le Bronze récent et l'âge du Fer est l'apparition du banquet couché (Dentzer 1982). Cette iconographie supprime peu à peu l'image solennelle du convive trônant, et s'impose à Chypre et en Grèce où elle sert à la figuration du rituel démocratique grec par excellence qu'est le symposium. Nous avons montré ailleurs (Yon et Caubet, à paraître) que Chypre a probablement joué un rôle de passeur dans cette mutation: tout en étant peuplée dès la fin du II^e millénaire par des populations de langue grecque, l'île jouit d'une organisation sociale de type monarchique oriental qui rivalise de faste avec les cours asiatiques. Leur modèle est la cour assyrienne, ce dont témoignent les monumentales statues royales vouées par les souverains chypriotes à partir de la fin du VIII^e siècle, ou les offrandes d'apparat

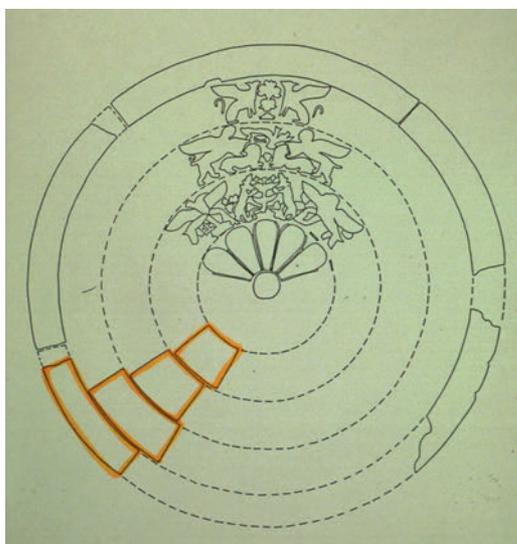


Fig. 2: Plateau de table circulaire, Palais royal d'Ougarit (Gachet-Bizollon 2007 n°272); dessin de la mission d'Ougarit



Fig. 3: Triple cadre, plateau de table quadrangulaire (?) Palais royal d'Ougarit (Gachet-Bizollon 2007 n°274, photo *in situ*, Archives de la mission d'Ougarit).

L'analyse à laquelle se livrent actuellement Jean Margueron et Olivier Callot de l'organisation architecturale du palais royal d'Ougarit suggère une possible localisation pour la célébration du banquet royal. Ils interprètent la cour VI (selon la dénomination du fouilleur) comme une salle de banquet, située à côté de la «salle du trône» à laquelle le roi pouvait accéder directement de l'étage où se situaient les appartements privés. Des restes d'une estrade dominant la salle du trône du côté sud (pièce 78 du plan, voir Yon 2006: 39-40) se prêtent admirablement à une «mise en scène» du souverain que l'on imagine bien couché sur un lit d'apparat en ivoire.

Boire et manger en position allongée sur un lit est aussi inconfortable que le meuble est encombrant. On s'est interrogé sur l'origine et les significations de cette pratique bizarre, qui connaîtra en Grèce et en Étrurie la faveur que l'on sait (Dentzer 1982). Ces quelques réflexions tendent à montrer que peut-être à Ougarit, avant que Chypre ne prenne le relais, la fonction du lit comme lieu d'ébats sexuels et celle de la table comme support de nourriture se rejoignent pour servir ensemble au cérémonial royal, fait de rituels complexes, où intervenaient probablement des performances de danse accompagnée de musique.

9,000 YEARS OF CULTIC TRADITIONS IN NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA AND SYRIA? THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CRESCENT, THE BULL AND THE POLE WITH HUMAN HEADS

Adelheid Otto

This note is dedicated to Stefania Mazzoni as a small token of gratitude for her outstanding contributions to Syrian archaeology and art.

Abstract

Secure representations of deities in the Syrian and Northmesopotamian region are testified for the first time around the mid 3rd millennium. At least this was the state of our knowledge, before the monumental pillars in Göbekli Tepe came to light, which represent supernatural and at least partly anthropomorphic beings already in the 9th millennium. The largest two pillars excavated so far, placed in the center of circle D, wear necklaces with a bucranium and a disc-and crescent pendant respectively – motifs, that are generally interpreted as the symbols of the storm god and the moon god. This is especially striking, since these two are known to be the major gods in the same region with important cult centers in Halab, Harran and others, well attested from the late third millennium onwards. Another striking cult object, later called the semeion, mainly venerated in Northern Syria, might have antecedents as well in the PPN. This article discusses if iconographic traditions may have indeed survived in Northern Mesopotamian and Syria over millennia, and how the gap in the documentation may be explained.

A remarkable stele fragment (Fig. 1) has been excavated by Stefania Mazzoni in the Iron Age III Temple A at Tell Afis (Mazzoni 2013, 210-11). The depiction on the pillar-like stele presumably showed an adoration scene in front of the “ruler with the peaked cap”, dating back to the Middle Bronze Age I. Extraordinary are the objects which are depicted above this scene: a crouching bull and the remains of a crescent and a disc. They probably formed the upper ending of the stele, where there used to be depicted the most important scenes, deities or divine symbols. On account of “the presence of the bull, the animal sacred to the storm god”, Mazzoni presumes that the stele may have been dedicated to this god, who was “at the time, ... the major god venerated in northern Syria, in Aleppo, and in Ugarit” (Mazzoni 2013, 211).



Fig. 2a: The T-shaped Pillar 31 of enclosure D at PPN Göbekli Tepe; height: 5.5 m (Becker et al. 2012, 20, Fig. 8).

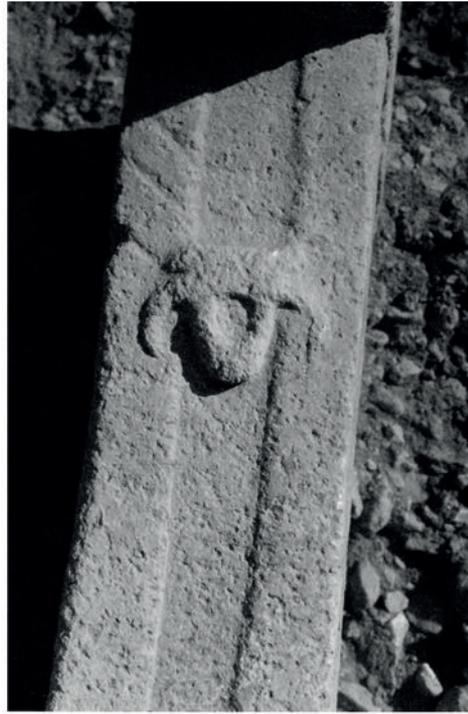


Fig. 2b: Detail of Pillar 31: the necklace with a bucranium as pendant (Schmidt 2007, 173, Fig. 81).



Fig. 3a: The T-shaped Pillar 18 of enclosure D at PPN Göbekli Tepe; height: 5.5 m (Schmidt 2011, 82, Fig. 34).



Fig. 3b: Detail of the necklace of Pillar 18: pendants in the form of enigmatic objects, a crescent and a disc (Schmidt 2011, 81, Fig. 32).

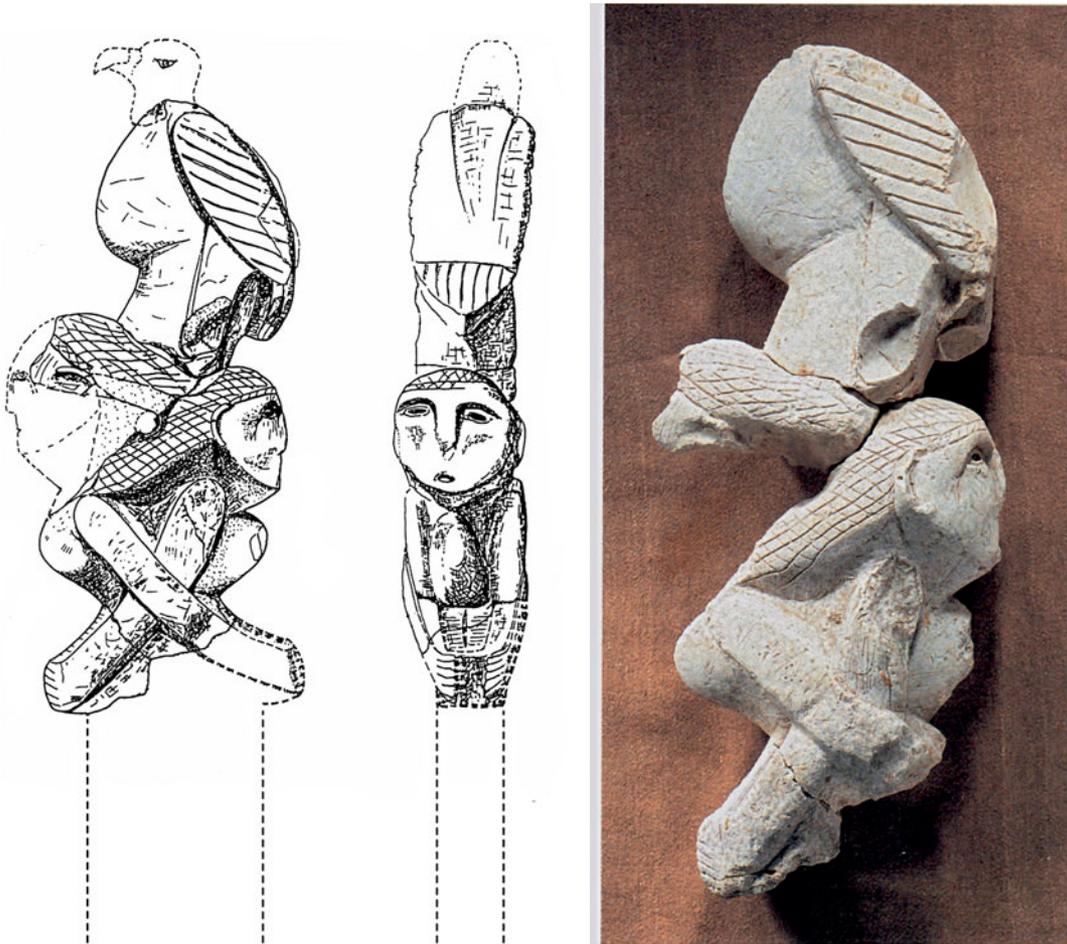


Fig. 6a/b: Composite pole, adorned with two human figures, topped by a bird; Nevalı Çori.
H. appr. 1 m (Hauptmann 2011, 134, Figs. 24a/b).

embrace the other person from the back. Their hands with the five fingers rest on the narrow sides of the pole (Hauptmann 2011, 99, 134, Fig. 24a/b). One face shows elaborate features with almond-shaped eyes, nose, mouth and ears. The face of the second figure has almost completely dropped off. Both wear a head garment or long hair, which has been engraved in the soft clay as a meshed structure. One figure's hair reaches down to its back. The hair of the other figure seems to be somewhat shorter, which could be also due to its hair ending at the beginning of the hair line of the other figure. A bird is sitting on top of the upper head. Its legs and body with flight feathers and tail have been preserved, whereas its head has broken off. Nevertheless, it is certain that the bird formed the upper ending of the pole, for the small place of fracture does not allow to carry heavy weight.

Such as it is, the stone pole with two human heads and topped by a bird is 1 m high, with the heads being live-sized. Adding the broken-off bird's head and assuming that the

MATERIAL EVIDENCE OF CULT AND RITUAL AT TELL ATCHANA, ANCIENT ALALAKH: DEITIES OF THE TRANSITIONAL MIDDLE-LATE BRONZE PERIOD

K.A. Yener

It is both an honor and pleasure to have been invited to contribute an article to a Festschrift for Stefania Mazzoni; a pleasure because it is gratifying to have the opportunity to pay tribute to a scholar who played such an important role in the definition of the art of the eastern Mediterranean region and an honor because of her eminence as an archaeologist of such extensive background. In the course of a distinguished career, Professor Mazzoni touched on many aspects of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age in general and in particular, the architecture, seals and pottery of Syria and Anatolia.

Abstract

The topic of cult and ritual is an important one, and one that Tell Atchana, site of ancient Alalakh, is well suited to contribute to.¹ Yet despite the numerous lines of evidence recovered from many years of excavations at Tell Atchana, there has been little comprehensive study of the material correlates of the religion and rituals of this Bronze Age city. With the new excavations, the body of evidence for cult spaces and practices are accumulating and the first steps have been taken towards a better understanding of local religion and ritual behavior both royal and common. The introduction of new cults and their associated rituals in the international Late Bronze Age are of great importance at Tell Atchana. During this time, many foreign contacts and eventually foreign overlords affected local society on many levels. This article will focus on a unique clay figurine from a newly excavated context close to the Level VII palace and temple.

TELL ATCHANA-ALALAKH

Tell Atchana, like its contemporary and likely politically related neighbor, Tell Afis (Mazzoni and Soldi 2013) is located not on the Mediterranean coast but rather about 50km inland. The size and navigability of the Orontes River led to such close connections to seaborne trade that the city can easily be considered part of the coastal realm. Possible

¹ The author would like to thank Mara Horowitz, Murat Akar and Tara Ingman for their help and observations in the various aspects of this paper.



Fig. 4: Detail of cult stand, AT/47/128.
Photo: M. Akar, Alalakh archives.



Fig. 5a-b: Lapis lazuli figurine, AT/46/20
(front and back views).
Photos: M. Akar, Alalakh archives.

These late references to Hurrian deities demonstrate the influence of Hurrian culture on the city in the era when the Hurro-Mitannian Empire ruled the entire region from its capital at Washukanni, now identified as Tell Fakhariyah in the Khabur region of Syria (Bartl and Bonatz 2013).

In further pursuit of the deities of Alalakh, it is important to consider the range of small terracotta figurines representing both human and animal subjects found throughout the site. Usually placed in graves, the ‘bird-faced’ naked female figurine with pierced ears and flattened body is common already in the MBII period (Marchetti 2007, Tepedino 2010). In a rare appearance of the male, clay figurines were sometimes attached to cult stands (Fig. 4). This elaborate cult stand was found inside the Level VII Temple (Woolley 1955, 248, Plate 58: AT/47/128). In the LBA, however, other nude female figurine types complement these ubiquitous clay figurines. An exceptional example carved in imported lapis lazuli was recovered from the Temple II treasury by Woolley (1955, 81; Plate 69 AT/46/20) and depicts a goddess with a very Hittite face exposing her lower body (Fig. 5a). She has a flat nose, prominent ears and is depicted pulling back her garment with her left arm. The garment drapes over her shoulders like a cape. Three perforations have been rendered by a drill. Remarkable is the detail afforded by the figurine of the turban-like wrapped headdress seen on the reverse. Equally unusual is her stance with her right arm extending down at her side (Fig. 5b). This stance is also featured on several naked female figurines made of clay discussed below.

A CLAY FIGURINE FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS

The context of the clay figurine (Figs. 6a and b) stems from new excavations in Square 32.57 which began in the courtyard of the Level IV Palace just in front of the monumental entryway and passed through 2.5 meters of accumulated LBI settlement into

ON NAKED WOMEN: A CASE STUDY

Candida Felli

Abstract

This article tackles the question of representations of naked women in Near Eastern Art, a favourite topic of Stefania Mazzoni, by approaching a specific iconographic type within the group of nude females occurring in a number of different media in Mesopotamia. Aim of this work is to provide new insights in the much debated question over the range of meanings applied to similar images in the visual language of that part of the ancient world.

Stefania Mazzoni has long dwelt upon artistic matters over her career: among them, the representation of women has been the subject of particular interest.¹ Her article on the ivory figurines found in the Treasure of Ur from Mari (Fig. 1) has given me impulse to offer here some thoughts on the theme of the nude female in Mesopotamian art and, in particular, on a specific iconography: the frontal figure with her hands clasped at the waist and hair in a curl on either side of the neck, which is certainly the most common type attested, appearing in seal imagery for about 80 years (1829-1750 BC) from the reign of Apil-sin to the end of Hammurabi's reign, but also found under the form of figurines and clay plaques for a longer period (Fig. 2),² of which the Mari pieces, dating to the third millennium, may well represent antecedents.³

In approaching this subject, I am aware to stand on giants' shoulders: the naked woman has been variously interpreted through time by a number of authorities and the literature on the topic is too extensive to be fully commented upon here;⁴ nonetheless, the

¹ Mazzoni 1975; 2002a; 2002b.

² Asher-Greve and Sweeney 2006, 152; it would correspond to *Typ II* in Uehlinger's typology: Uehlinger 2001, 53, 58 and 59. To explain her sudden appearance in seal repertoire Collon 1986, 132, suggests that the king Apil-Sin could have set a statue of her which would have somehow conditioned the seal iconography. For a detailed and precise description of the characteristic hair-do see Blocher 1987, 45: "Allen gemeinsam ist das in der Mitte gescheitelte Haar, das nach beiden Seiten hin zum Teil in vier Zöpfe geflochten wird, die dann im Nacken zusammentreffen und dort ein großes Haargewebe bilden".

³ Braun-Holzinger 1984, 19; 1999, 150; for Akkadian clay figurines as forerunners of the type under discussion see Auerbach 1992, 309, 310. On the similar ivory figurines found in the Ishtar temple at Assur see last Wicke 2010, 72-80, esp. Pl. 2.P.1-3. Indeed naked female representations are found in sculpture in the Near East as early as prehistoric times: Moorey 2004, 13-41.

⁴ For a review of the literature up to the 80's see Blocher 1987, 54-76; on most recent works see Bahrani 2001; Moorey 2004; Assante 2006.



Fig. 7: Cylinder seal, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève: Vollenweider, M.-L., 1967. *Catalogue raisonné des sceaux cylindres et intailles vol. I, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève, Genève, no. 42, Pl. 23.8.*



Fig. 8: Cylinder seal, British Museum: Collon, D., 1986. *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Cylinder Seals III. Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian Periods*, British Museum Publications, London, no. 615.

times, like the one postulated by Wiggermann, but I claim that her frequent depiction on different media in the second millennium is justified by her role within society which I wish here to investigate more thoroughly.²⁵

INSCRIPTIONS ON SEALS

First of all, it has to be underlined that most of the seals with the nude female are uninscribed;²⁶ of the rest, many, as most of the seals of the earlier part of the second millennium, bear a simple inscription with the name of a deity, or of a pair of deities, while the others belong to persons who declare themselves to be servants of a goddess or, less frequently, of a god, apparently a more developed version of the earlier formula.²⁷ A significant part of the latter are women (Figs. 7 and 8).²⁸ It is still a matter of debate whether legends of this kind should indicate special devotion on the part of the seal owner or imply that the latter is part of the cultic personnel of a temple: if, as it seems, the second option is more likely,²⁹ it could be an indication of a special favour towards this imagery within

²⁵ One may object that the hairy male figure identified by Wiggermann in 1982 with the god *lahmu* mentioned in the texts is portrayed invariably without a divine headdress but, in that case, the origin of the iconographic type goes back to the third millennium (see Wiggermann 1992, xiii, note 3), a time in which the presence of horned headdresses for deities was yet not compulsory.

²⁶ It is to recall that an increase in legends on seals took place in the time period between Sumulael and Hammurabi: Blocher 1992, 144.

²⁷ Blocher 1987, 186-188, according to which, the most frequently attested deity in the inscriptions is Adad, followed by Shamash and Aya; see also Braun-Holzinger 1996, 252, 253, note 71; Collon 1986, 19. On female sealing practices in OB Mesopotamia see Colbow 2002.

²⁸ Buchanan 1981, nos. 813, 876; Colbow 1995, 80, no. 30.1; Collon 1986, nos. 282, 291, 613-615; Legrain 1925, no. 380; Porada 1948, no. 568; Vollenweider 1967, nos. 42, 51; von der Osten 1934, n. 247.

²⁹ For examples in the Akkadian period see Felli 2006, 42.

IMAGES OF THE STEPPE: THE BULL-MAN AND GOAT BOY POTS FROM BANAT/BAZI

Anne Porter

Abstract

Containing the only imagery found at the third millennium site of Banat/Bazi on the Middle Euphrates, Syria, diverse ceramic objects nevertheless form a coherent corpus because of shared – even, perhaps, cross-referenced – iconography. Image, object and context combined attest to the social and ideological significance of the steppe in the daily lives of the people from Banat.

The third millennium site of Tell Banat/Jebel Bazi is located on a small, northwards jutting, promontory of the escarpment between the Euphrates river valley and the steppe in Syria. The site is well known for its varied and monumental mortuary structures (McClellan and Porter 1999; Porter 2002a, 2002b, 2007/8). It also housed extensive pottery production areas dating to its two main phases of occupation. It is to the earliest phase, 2700/2600-2450 BCE (Banat Period IV), that the pottery production area comprising kilns, roofed and unroofed workspaces located in Area D, belongs. To the later phase, 2450-2300 BCE (Banat Period III) is dated the majority of the industrial activities that took place in Area G. The evidence for the manufacture of pottery in Area G included kilns, tournettes, piles of unbaked sherds and a plastered basin for the levigation of clay. All four objects containing the only imagery, as opposed to statuary, found at Banat were recovered from either Area D or G. These are: a sealed jar rim and a covered wagon with an incised image on the back panel from Area D and two incised pots from Area G.

In traditional art historical approaches each of the four images might be considered primitive in style and rudimentary in technique. The mundane vessels they are on – Plain Simple Ware storage jars and what is often consigned to irrelevance as a child's toy, a model – would be treated cursorily, or subordinated to the power of the image over the object. Indeed, this material might be trivialized as “domestic” in comparison to the “high art” of palatial workshops that expresses the self-conceptions of powerful elites. It is these same quotidian attributes however that point to the profound relevance of these objects in shaping ancient conceptions of the world. They are also important for modern understandings of those conceptions. The nature of the materials that carry them, the context in which they were found, the images themselves, all portray an environment that was part of the daily, lived experience of the inhabitants of Banat and in the making and using of these and other such objects, reproduced connections to that world and the social relations that operated within it.



Plate 1: The Bull-Man sherd.

approach an experiential perspective in the way the drawings are presented while maintaining legibility.

Unlike glyptic, and too the more common arrangement of designs on pots (see the Goat Boy Pot in Fig. 3), the bull-man scene is not arranged in a linear fashion, although, as is typical of vessels divided into bands, a deeply incised line delimits the picture (not shown in Fig. 1; see Pl. 1). Instead, the image is more like the arrangement typical of the form known (erroneously) as “master of animals” found on both stamp and cylinder seals, and dating back in its essentials to the fifth millennium BCE (Hole 2010; Costello 2010). The center of the scene on this pot, and the core element of the image, is a group of three figures: a human-animal hybrid, the bull-man, flanked by two actual animals – gazelle, judging by their long curved horns, elongated muzzles and short tails. The bull-man holds each gazelle by one of its rear legs so that it hangs upside down. They in turn are bordered by another two gazelle, right way up, with heads lowered in the pose of grazing. The spaces above and in-between are filled by apparently randomly scattered birds, although all but one face the same way. The birds are identified as bustards, the avian equivalent of gazelle as symbols of the steppe. Bustards live on the ground but do fly, and are among the largest birds that can do so. Between the two gazelle on the right is a creature difficult to identify. It may be a scorpion. In favor of this reading is the three strokes on the left side of the body, possibly indicative of six legs, in which case it is depicted with arched tail aimed in the direction of the living gazelle on the right. Scorpions commonly occur

IRON AGE CLAY FIGURINES FROM TELL AFIS

Paola D'Amore

Abstract

The clay figurines are a popular production, widespread since very ancient times, linked to specific domestic cults and to the world of the afterlife. Antropomorphic, female and male, and zoomorphic figurines are documented in all of Mesopotamia, but with a variety of types and production techniques used in different regions. The aim of this essay is to present and analyze the clay figurine production of the Iron Age at Tell Afis (North-western Syria)¹.

In general the cultural horizon of the clay figurines dated to the Iron Age I-III discovered in Northern Syria, shows a clear connection with the iconographic and stylistic features of the contemporary Palestinian and Cilician production. Although there is as yet no comprehensive study of the Syrian clay figurines of this period, these connections with neighbouring regions have aided the author in developing a typology for the Afis collection, based on the working techniques and the subjects represented.

A main division into three groups can be made according to the subject represented: female figurines, male figurines and animal figurines.

The female figurines have two subtypes: the “pillar” type with very schematic cylindrical/tubular body, head and arms applied, popular in the Iron Age I-II², and the “Astarte plaques”, documented from the Iron Age to the Persian Period. The study of this last type, carried out by P. Riis in 1949³, was intended to identify the stylistic differences between the Iron Age and the later Persian plaques and a possible overview of their chronology. Riis identified many specific patterns in the Syrian Iron age typology, as figurines with enlarged abdomen, extended pubis, hands clasping the breast, long face (so called U-type), prominent nose above the arched mouth, which he dated to the 8th century B.C. on the base of the similarities with a plaque figurine found in Hama in the destruction level (Period E) which is well dated to 720 B.C.⁴

¹ Some of the Afis clay figurines are presented for the first time in this paper and are marked with *. They will also be included in the detailed catalogue to be published at a later date. Drawings are made by Sergio Martelli.

² Moorey 1980, 100-103.

³ Riis 1949, 69-90.

⁴ Riis-Buhl 1990, 196, no. 707.

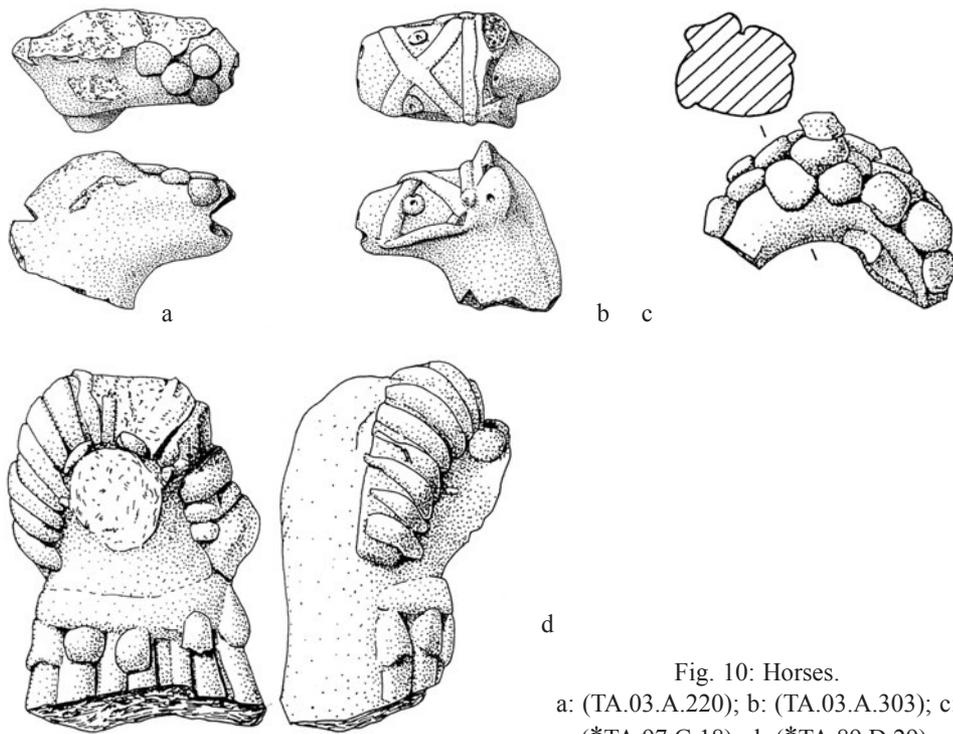


Fig. 10: Horses.
 a: (TA.03.A.220); b: (TA.03.A.303); c:
 (*TA.97.G.18); d: (*TA.89.D.29).

C.3 Bovids

Eight examples of bovids have been found. Only two are bulls (*TA.96.G.75 and *TA.09.A.41, Fig. 11a) while another is probably a cow (TA.87.D.53, Fig. 11b). Finally a bison with thick neck, tubular snout, small head and thin ears (TA.89.E.318). Similar figurines are documented at Hama from a house (Phase F2), dated to 1175/70-1075/50 B.C., and at Neirab where the bison has the body decorated with incised circles⁵⁹.

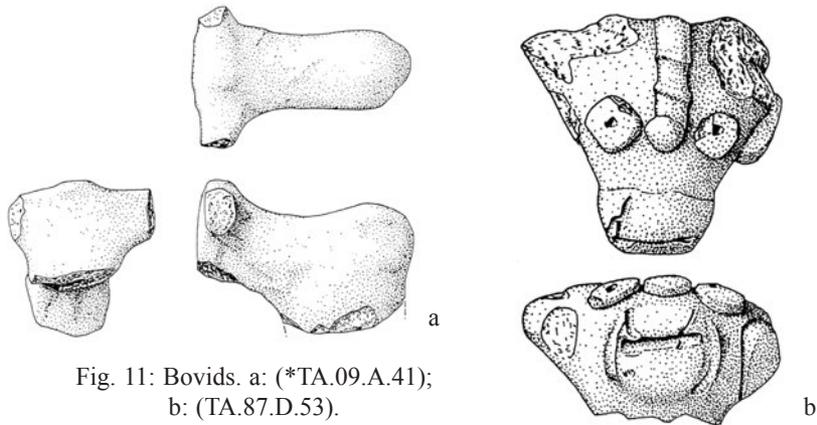


Fig. 11: Bovids. a: (*TA.09.A.41);
 b: (TA.87.D.53).

⁵⁹ Carrière-Barrois 1927, Pl. 49, no. 20.

TENSIONAL FACTORS AND COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS. CROSSOVERS BETWEEN LINGUISTICS AND ART CRITICISM

Giorgio Buccellati

Abstract

Discourse analysis has focused attention on the mechanisms that hold together a text, connecting seemingly unrelated strands in a unity that links non-contiguous elements. Compositional analysis seeks to do the same for representational art. The limit of expectation is an important factor, because tensionality does not happen at random or in a vacuum. The article will outline the method using two simple examples from Syro-Mesopotamia.

The notion of structure has come to occupy a central position in modern thought, beginning with Kant and leading up to the explicit definitions in the early part of the twentieth century. But a de facto concern with structure as a governing principle in the organization of data has been a hallmark of human intellectual activity since prehistoric times. Here I would like to focus on the factors that helped define compositional coherence in early Syro-Mesopotamia, along two main lines of argument: (1) the tensional dimension that underlies the goal of (2) compositional integrity. In this light, the trend towards naturalism may be seen in purely formal terms as a conceptual framework that points expectation in the direction of a known limit: this will help us connect the two moments, the one where we view the tensional dimension that links together single elements, and the one where the tensional factor can be seen at the level of the compositional whole.

This being in the nature of an essay, I will not provide a documentary basis nor a bibliographical apparatus. Discourse analysis is a particularly well developed aspect of linguistics, and it is useful in helping refine the sensitivity for compositional analysis in the figurative arts. I will seek to accomplish this by considering side by side two examples from the textual and glyptic traditions of Syro-Mesopotamia, in the hope that this may be of interest to Stefania, a friend with whom I have enjoyed many a moment in life and in the shared pursuit of common research goals, and who has dealt with great sensitivity with issues of style and with the way in which this proves to be relevant for a humanistic appropriation of the deeper values of Mesopotamian civilization.

If the “Code” had been similarly constructed, it would have sounded somewhat like the following:

first temporal clause	v 14	<i>Inu Marduk ...</i>	When Marduk...
second temporal clause	v 25	<i>inūmīšu:</i>	on that day:
subject	i 50	<i>Hammurapī ... anāku...</i>	I, Hammurapī, ...
object-verb	adapted from beginning of epilog	<i>dīnāt mīšarim ukīn-ma mātam ussam kīnam u rīdam dam-qam ušašbit.</i>	I established the decrees of justice and thus caused the people to take the straight path and good behavior.
the “laws” as a separate text	v 26	<i>“Šumma awīlum...”</i>	“If a man...”

Comparing this imaginary version of the “Code” to the original is instructive in that it shows how much more static the overall structure is. What is lost is the tension in the original, where the prolog and the epilog are part of the one and the same syntactic whole, *within which* the “laws” are encased as the subject of a vast nominal sentence. In the Sippar inscription, the object of the king’s activity is external to the inscription – it is the city wall built around Sippar itself. In the “Code,” instead, the object is *within* the text of the stela, and the syntactical organization of the inscription emphasizes this through the tensional arrangement of its parts.

We may apply a similar transform to the seal of Ishar-beli. In the figure on the right, I have grouped together in the center of the overall composition the vertical figures, along with the cuneiform legend, and I have placed at the two ends the oblique figures of the two animals. The linear orientation of the elements still conveys a certain contrast between vertical/static and oblique/dynamic, but the impact is clearly quite different from the original, where the naturalistic rendering is intrinsically woven into the realistic representational aspect.



Fig. 3. Reorganization of compositional structure of seal of Ishar-beli.